

## Statement on the Death of Meade Alcorn

*January 13, 1992*

Barbara and I are deeply saddened by the death of our longtime family friend and leader of the Republican Party, Meade Alcorn. Meade was chairman of the Republican Party in the late 1950's and was an inspiration to all who were formulating political careers during the time of his leadership. He was a practitioner and a believer who gave the party ideals and strength

through its national organization.

Meade was a personal friend of my father and our entire family. He gave us support and advice at many points in our lives. I spoke with his wonderful wife, Marcia, this afternoon to offer our sympathy and condolences. Barbara and I offer our prayers for Meade Alcorn.

## White House Statement on the President's Meeting With President Mario Soares of Portugal

*January 13, 1992*

The President met with Portuguese President Mario Soares for approximately a half hour in the Oval Office. President Soares is in town on a private visit during which he attended an exhibition at the National Gallery. The President expressed his strong desire to cooperate closely with Portugal as the EC President, an office which Portugal took over in January. The President stressed

the importance of concluding the Uruguay round. The two Presidents discussed Asian developments and the former Soviet Union, as well as issues relevant to southern Africa. The President and President Soares reaffirmed our strong bilateral relationship and committed each side to continued cooperation.

## Remarks to the America 2000 Community Leadership Conference

*January 14, 1992*

Lamar, thank you so much and all of you. When I walked in here, Ed told me there's an electricity in that room, a real commitment. Well, you can feel it just coming here. And I want to thank all of you for being here, coming from all across our great country to participate in something that is fundamentally important to our future.

I want to thank Lamar, who has taken this leadership role, taken it across the country, taken it out there in the best non-partisan spirit that one could possibly conceive, and making dramatic progress, I might add. He's too modest. He set out some of the examples, building his examples around those who are here and have taken

leadership roles in the community. But he himself has been to countless numbers of States and gotten this program really rolling. And I think the country is grateful to him for that leadership.

And he's put together a first-class team over at the Department of Education, I might add. David Kearns, giving up a fantastically large corporate assignment, as Pete Silas and all of you know, to take on this key role simply because he is committed, as is Lamar, to helping the children of this country. And so we're fortunate to have this program in good hands.

I want to thank Ed Donley. I want to

thank Dick Leshner, the able head of this organization, day-to-day head of it; Bill Lurton and all in this organization here in Washington who are providing the leadership, the catalytic leadership, to mobilize these communities.

And as you know, Pete Silas, a very busy man, is sacrificing and giving an awful lot of time to the Chamber nationally, not just on this issue but on a wide array of issues. He and I just returned from what we both agree was a productive trip to Asia with one terrible downside: Neither of us can sleep. [Laughter]

I talked to him about it, and we've determined that it'll take a couple of more days, but I am very grateful to Pete for going all that way into these various capitals to take the American message across the world. It reminded us, that trip, that we're entering an unparalleled new century of the high-tech global, and I emphasize that word, marketplace.

It's going to be a tough, extraordinarily competitive world. And the key to success is going to be education. It's simple: Nations that take the responsibility to invest in the minds of their citizens, all their citizens, are going to move ahead. And nations that don't, even great nations, are going to be left behind.

And America 2000 will help us succeed in a new age of competition. It's going to liberate the best minds and brightest thinkers of this land and will teach us that learning is a lifelong endeavor. And we're in the midst of a revolution, a revolution to free us from the past and open every sort of thrilling new gate of opportunity in the future.

But I think everyone here knows at the community level that it is going to be a tough battle. Everyone knows that at present our schools will not pass the test of the 21st century. And who knows it best? Who knows that best? Parents. Parents know it. Business community leaders know it. And our kids, I'm afraid our own kids know it.

But we also know how to meet this challenge, and that is by achieving these six national education goals that Lamar referred to. These are those goals:

By the end of this decade, our children will start school ready to learn. On the Fed-

eral side that means Head Start, but it means a lot more than that.

Our children will achieve at least a 90-percent high school graduation rate. It's an achievable goal.

Our children will demonstrate competence in five core subjects measured against world-class standards.

Our children will be first in the world in science and math.

Our adults will be literate and able to compete, therefore, in the work force.

And then the sixth, our schools will be disciplined, safe, and drug-free.

Those are the six education goals. They were set, as Lamar said, not in a partisan way but in a convening of the Governors at Charlottesville was the first step and then working together with partisanship aside to come up with these education goals which have been universally endorsed.

And I'm so pleased that you and the Chamber are committed to this crusade and that more than 600 individual chambers have pledged to make their communities America 2000 communities. The tie between this organization and the America 2000 program is a natural. America 2000 arises out of the understanding that educational excellence is everyone's business. Everyone must take part in creating a climate in which the schools and the communities of the future can flourish.

Our national goals, as I mentioned, were born out of a bipartisan conference of all our Governors, Democrats and Republicans, working not for parties but for the Nation. And let me say I'm sorry to have missed the Governor of Georgia, who was up here in just that spirit—Dick filling me in on his contribution to this organizational gathering. Now, with America 2000, every person of every party in this Nation can take part in what is a populist revolution.

America 2000, believe me, it is spreading like a prairie fire. Since April, 30 States and 1,000 communities have joined up, embracing our challenge to adopt and achieve these national goals, these national education goals.

But not everyone's ready for the future. As the train pulls out of the station, many Members of Congress have not yet climbed

on board. The House has taken some important steps towards the American achievement tests. Its bill, I think you'd agree, shows some promise. But while Americans across this Nation are working to spark a revolution for the future, the Senate regrettably remains riveted on the past. Its bill, S. 2, is sponsored by Senator Kennedy, and it falls far short, tragically short, of any of our goals. And when the American people want transformation, we are being offered business-as-usual up there.

We want a half-billion dollars to create break-the-mold, new American schools. We want school choice to provide middle- and low-income families the same control over their children's education that wealthier people have, school choice. We want to give communities and teachers flexibility in spending \$9 billion in Federal education money. And we want to give the Secretary of Education more discretion in sweeping away burdensome regulations. We want these exciting and essential innovations for the good of our country, and to all of this, regrettably, S. 2, the Kennedy bill, says no.

The train's gathering steam, and that bill is literally standing in the way. And we have to tell Congress of our priorities. We want school choice for parents. We want to return power to the local schools, not mandate everything from Washington but return that power to the local schools. We want American achievement tests. And they'll be fair; they can be voluntary. But we want those American achievement tests. We want new, and by new I'm talking revolutionarily new, American schools. We want America 2000 communities. And we want our kids to excel.

Americans do not want to live in the past. Things move too quickly, and we have to prepare ourselves for the future. Our schools must lead the way, not follow. We need schools for the 21st century, not museums to the failed experiments of the past. And you have to get this message to the people in your communities. You are the leaders. You can do it. You are in the process of doing just that.

America 2000 is a national partnership that requires the involvement of students, teachers, parents, principals, and certainly business and community leaders because

this battle for educational excellence will be won home by home, school by school, community by community all across our Nation. You can be a catalyst for change right in your own hometown.

When you return home from this landmark conference, first make sure your schools have adopted those six national goals. Make sure they raise standards for educational performance and hold schools and teachers accountable. That is the key word: accountability.

And second, encourage your employees to take an active role in their children's education, help them with their homework, read to them every day. Parents must pass on to their own kids the drive for educational excellence.

Third, reinforce the message to students that hard work today pays off for the future. Not only does this mean a good job for them, it means a good, strong future for our country.

And when you get home, you, your neighbors, and your friends really must send Congress a message: Start building tomorrow's schools today. Give parents the choice they want and children the education they deserve. And remind them that anyone who says they understand America must understand that we want the best schools for our children.

America 2000 restores the natural relationship between the family and the school. And as I look at the educational problems facing our country, that is a tremendously important relationship. It's been weakened. We've got to strengthen it. It closes the gap between the living room and the classroom. It invites everyone to help break the mold, to build schools for the future, and to lay the foundations for a new American century.

I can assure you, and Lamar has followed up beautifully on this, that every Department in our Government, Defense included, are on board in terms of this America 2000 program. I'm delighted that Pat Saiki, the head of the SBA, is here. She and her organization are enormously important in furthering the objectives of America 2000.

So, it's not just the Congress I'm appealing to. It is the administration that is now

on board. It is this Chamber that is in a leadership role for the future. The entire Nation, if you look at it broadly, has really embraced America 2000. And now, we just need to get the message to the people up there on the Congress who work at the Hill and who have a lot to say about the funding that is necessary to see this program successfully concluded.

Not all of it depends, thank heavens, on Federal funding. You're where the action is, right at the community level. But we've got to get the message to 535 people who work down the street to think anew, to work with you in creating these brand-new, revolutionarily new schools. Together, I really believe that we're onto something here, that we will make our future proud

and bright.

And so thank you all very, very much for your commitment, for your leadership role, for laying aside the politics to think of the future of the kids in this greatest, freest nation on the face of the Earth.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

*Note: The President spoke at 8:55 a.m. at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In his remarks, he referred to Edward Donley, chairman, Center for Workforce Preparation and Quality Education; David T. Kearns, Deputy Secretary of Education; C.J. (Pete) Silas, chairman, Richard L. Leshner, president, and William H. Lurton, vice-chairman, U.S. Chamber of Commerce; and Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia.*

## Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Earvin (Magic) Johnson

January 14, 1992

### *Johnson's Role on AIDS Commission*

Q. Mr. President, what kind of contribution do you think Magic Johnson can make in the AIDS battle?

*The President.* Well, it is my view that he can make an enormous contribution. He already has when you read the interviews and the reaction that he's having on the young people of this country for this very honest, compassionate, and sensitive view he's taken. It makes an impression on you. And he'll make a contribution on the Commission.

I wrote him a letter, a personal letter, some time ago and said that I recognize there are all kinds of opportunities now to serve mankind and that I'd love to have him on this Commission but he should feel free to say no if there were other priorities. And if he accepted that there would be no pressure, not that you could pressure a guy this size anyway—[laughter]—but no pressure to do anything other than do what the umpire does: Call them as they see them. And he's doing that. And he's out on his own around this country.

I think it's a wonderful thing, and I think

he's already having an effect on lifestyle, for one hand, and, on the other hand, this whole question of compassion and understanding for people that are afflicted by this. So, it's a two-way street as I see it. One is the education process, and the other is just because of who he is, his character. The way people look up to him in this country, he can probably make a better appeal for compassion and understanding for victims of this than any American. It's that simple.

### *AIDS Funding*

Q. Mr. President, have you committed in your new budget to spend more on AIDS treatment and research?

*The President.* In anticipation of getting that question, I will point out the fact that we are spending \$4.25 billion total now. We are spending on research \$1.8 billion, which is more than we do on cancer, more than we do on heart disease. And we will do the utmost possible.

I have been in close touch with the people at NIH, and I expect, Magic, you'll be if you haven't: Dr. Fauci and Dr. Broder and some out there. And we will try to get